

Concord Middle School



Program of Studies 2009-2010

Concord Middle School Core Values

All Concord Middle School staff are committed to cultivating a climate that nurtures the following values in our students.

Community: the compassion and loyalty towards the world outside of the self.

High Achievement: the confidence and willpower to learn from mistakes, appreciate success, and grow towards one's potential.

Lifelong Learning: the passion to discover new interests and to uncover the fascinating in the mundane.

Organization of the Concord Middle School

The Concord Middle School is made up of two separate buildings, the Peabody Building and the Sanborn Building. While some differences exist between the physical structures of the two buildings, the middle school is administered by one Principal and one Assistant Principal and the instructional programs are supervised by one group of academic and special area department chairpersons. Under this organizational format, all middle school students participate in the same courses and activities without regard to their building assignment.

Grade Level Houses - The staff and students of the Concord Middle School are divided into grade level "houses" in each of the school buildings. A "house" consists of approximately one hundred-and-ten students, four academic teachers (one each in English, math, science and social studies), a guidance counselor, a Sped teacher, and foreign language teachers.

We believe that the house system of student organization enhances the quality of the total middle school program. Experience has demonstrated that the house teachers are better able to concentrate their collective efforts to effect positive student development. In addition, the house structure facilitates home and school communication.

Student Grouping - The middle school is committed to student organization that is primarily heterogeneous. The total population of a house and a building, therefore, should represent the full range of student abilities, interests, and needs of the entire school. The exception is a homogeneous grouping plan in mathematics. In this academic area, students are placed into levels. Student level assignments are recommended by math teachers based on student performance. It is important to note that math level assignments are flexible and may be changed during each school year when student performance indicates a need for a math level change.

After School - The Concord Middle School staff runs a rich and engaging after-school program at CMS. Typically, the after-school program starts in the first week of October. The program offers interested students opportunities for academic support, academic enrichment, athletics, visual and performing arts, engineering, debate, and geopolitics. Programs meet from 2:30-3:30 or from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Students are dismissed so they can take the corresponding late buses. We are always looking to start new programs based on student interest so that students and parents should speak to the principal if

they have an idea for a new program. Families receive a listing of after-school programs in the August mailing and a more exhaustive description of the after-school options is available the last week in September.

School Advisory Council (SAC) - SAC is a representative school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers and a community representative. The establishment of SAC is a requirement of the Education Reform Act of 1993. The PTG elects parent members of the School Council for two-year terms. The elected teacher members also serve two-year terms. The function of SAC is to assist the school principal in adopting goals that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards, identifying the educational needs of students; reviewing the annual school building budget, formulating a school improvement plan, and reviewing, updating and approving the Parent/Student Handbook. SAC meetings are held in accordance with the open-meeting law, and meeting dates are posted at the town hall and are listed in the monthly middle school *Missive*.

Student Schedule of Courses

Middle school students are expected to attend a full schedule of required courses and activity periods. We believe that the course schedules presented below provide a challenging, yet balanced, learning program for our middle school students.

<u>Course</u>	<u># Periods per week</u>		
	<u>6th Grade</u>	<u>7th Grade</u>	<u>8th Grade</u>
Applied Technology	N/A	N/A	2
Art	2	2	2
Developmental Language Arts	-	4 *	4*
English	5	5	5
FACS	N/A	2	N/A
Foreign Language	3	4 *	4 *
Fundamentals	1	-	-
Health	1	FACS	2
Instructional Technology	1	N/A	N/A
Math	5	5	5
Music (General)	2	2	N/A
Music Performance/Fine Arts Cycle (pottery, woodworking, theater arts)	2	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2
Science	5	5	5
Social Studies	5	5	5

* Students who are assigned to Developmental Language Arts in grades 7 and/or 8 do not take a foreign language.

Programs of Study

The following section of the booklet contains course descriptions of all academic and special area programs offered at the middle school. Descriptions have been prepared by the staff for the purpose of helping parents and students acquire a better understanding of the middle school.

Applied Technology

Applied Technology is a project-oriented, inter-disciplinary science course for all eighth graders. The class meets twice each week and the program is designed to address all twenty-seven Massachusetts educational frameworks for Technology/Engineering. The course content constitutes 25% of the eighth grade Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS exam.

The theme of Applied Tech is “Where engineers use science to solve problems” and the goal is to work in conjunction with science, social studies, English, world languages, math, health, and other subjects to expand our capacity to understand the world. In Applied Technology we solve problems by developing solutions based on the scientific knowledge gained through investigation.

As part of Applied Technology, students address engineering questions and technological solutions that emphasize research and problem solving. Students will learn to identify and understand the five elements of a technology system (goal, inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback). Students will use knowledge acquired in their mathematics and science classes to support their exploration of engineering and problem solving. They should achieve a more advanced level of skill in engineering design by learning to conceptualize problems, design prototypes in three dimensions, use tools to construct their prototypes, test their ideas, and make modifications as necessary. The culmination of the engineering design experience is the development and delivery of engineering presentations.

Course content is divided into 11 subject units including:

- The Engineering Design Process – Beginning with several small therapeutic and assistive device projects, students will explore the eight steps in developing effective problem-solving products.
- Bio-engineering Technology – This topic is coordinated with Social Studies and English to address genetics, eugenics, and the potential for using cutting-edge science to address complex medical and social situations.
- Mechanical and Computer Aided Design – Students will use mechanical drawing and SketchUp6 Pro software to draw multi-view diagrams then construct a prototype three-dimensional puzzle cube.
- Architectural Design & Construction – Taught in conjunction with the World Language and DLA programs, students will use SketchUp6 to draft detailed construction drawings and build scale models of commercial, historic, or residential structures.

- Mechanical Engineering and Manufacturing – Drawing on prior knowledge of simple machines and physics, teams of students will construct intricate—Rube Goldberg-style—machines to complete a simple task.
- Structural Engineering – Working in teams, students will investigate forces acting on large structures and construct a bridge using simple materials to address a unique challenge.
- MCAS Prep – This is a brief review of course material anticipated for the exam.
- Communication Engineering – Beginning with Morse, binary, and other communication codes, this unit leads to a multi-media presentation on the eighth grade trip to Washington.
- Safety Engineering – Conducted in conjunction with the Health program, students will address functional and technical specifications of products designed to keep us safe.
- Community & Environmental Engineering – Developed in conjunction with Concord Public Works, this unit includes a visit to several field locations managed by CPW.

Art Department Program

At Concord Middle School, art instruction focuses on each student's unique observations of and experiences in the world around us. Each young artist is encouraged to find his or her own "visual voice" and to explore a wide range of tools, media and concepts to make their visualizations come to life. Students witness, interpret and express themselves through drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, digital image-making, three-dimensional construction and ceramics.

At each grade level we study and conscientiously utilize the basic art and design elements of line, shape, color, texture, pattern and form. Typically concentrating on a few elements at a time, students discover how these elements can be used to enrich their visual vocabulary.

With each successive year, students embrace more complexity in the manipulation and handling of various media. Similarly, they entertain more difficult visual concepts to meet their maturing observations, interpretations and technical capabilities.

Grade Six - two classes per week

During this foundation year students experience a wide variety of visual media and are introduced to the elements of art (line, shape, color, texture, pattern, form). They begin to learn ways to concretely evaluate their own work as well as the visual world around them in terms of these elements. Basic color theory is reviewed and amplified, with emphasis placed on the emotional and visual effects of this art element. Students use pattern and texture to enhance the visual and tactile aspects of painting and sculpture. They study and interpret shapes and forms in nature using various media to describe what they see, feel or imagine.

Grade Seven - two classes per week

Concepts and skills learned in grade six are strengthened and augmented. In two-dimensional

work, students emphasize color value and contrast. They experiment with new drawing and painting techniques to create work from both observation of the natural and fabricated world as well as from the world of the imagination. Mixed media and clay construction introduces further variety to students' three-dimensional expression. Compositional strategies are introduced.

Beginning in seventh grade, classes are organized by trimester, with each class centered around a central concept:

Drawing (trimester one)

Students practice drawing skills that are fundamental to all art making. This includes representational and non-representational approaches.

The Imagined World (trimester two)

Students investigate strategies for representing the world of memory, imagination, feelings and experience.

3D Art (trimester three)

In this multimedia class, students apply themselves to the processes involved in solving visual problems three-dimensionally.

Grade Eight - two classes per week

Students work with more complex visual concepts and applications of the elements of art. They continue to draw expressively as well as realistically. Using an experimental approach they observe inherent properties of artistic media and materials in order to arrive at unique solutions to visual problems. They use sketchbooks to create visual collections as basis for future work and to document their thinking and processes. In critique and discussion we strive to orchestrate meaningful use of the full complement of art elements and compositional concepts.

Again, classes are organized by trimester and concept:

The Natural World (trimester one)

Student artists use science and nature as sources and inspiration for expression.

Portraits (trimester two)

Students investigate the concepts and practices of portraiture from various traditions and perspectives

Bookmaking (trimester three)

Students explore the creation of books as a format for artistic expression, using a variety of techniques and approaches. They explore sequencing and juxtaposition to build meaning.

Evaluation (all grades)

We evaluate each student according to the following expectations:

- each student puts his or her best thinking and effort into visual projects
- each student strives to devise his or her own unique strategy for expression
- each student actively expresses ideas in discussions and critiques

- each student respects other students and their work
- each student respects tools, materials and work space

Developmental Language Arts Program

The Developmental Language Arts Program teaches students strategies that enable them to read and respond to a variety of texts with greater understanding and appreciation. It also reviews the basics of writing and vocabulary acquisition in connection with literature, allowing students to refine their writing skills and overall understanding of language.

Students in grades seven and eight who are recommended for Developmental Language Arts meet four times a week throughout the year. Since the ability to read to learn and to communicate ideas clearly are the foundations of academic success, seven and eighth grade students who need additional help in reading, writing, or other language skills are recommended for the developmental language arts class in place of world languages. Students learn strategies for reading fiction and non-fiction texts. Students work specifically on comprehension skills, vocabulary development, and adjusting their reading to its purpose. They also practice answering comprehension as well as open-ended response questions similar to those found on the ELA MCAS. Instruction in writing is provided, especially as a support for other academic classes.

Evaluation - The evaluation will include a general performance grade based on the thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and accuracy of a student's classwork; the extent to which the student accepts and acts upon constructive feedback; and the extent to which the student's work habits demonstrate a serious approach to learning. Students will also receive a conduct grade.

Electives

Murals - After being introduced to public art, site-specific artwork, and the methods and materials involved in creating large-scaled visual compositions, students design and construct murals in the lobbies at Peabody and Sanborn. The process is designed to foster individual expression, collaborative art-making skills and community awareness.

Multimedia - Three different multimedia courses will be offered throughout the year. The trimester long courses are, Flash Animation, iMovie, and Web Page Design. In each class, students will be introduced to the basic skills involved in using software which may include Flash Animation, iMovie, DreamWeaver and Photoshop, depending on the trimester. They will also learn correct presentation skills. Students will learn to work with text, images, audio and video clips to create effective multimedia communication. Once they become familiar with the features of the software, they will have the opportunity to experiment more independently to create a meaningful project for their personal use or for a particular curriculum area. In each course, students will be assessed based on their understanding of the applications taught, their ability to complete an effective project, and the use of multimedia tools to emphasize and support their work.

Pottery - Students begin the class with a series of hand-building exercises to discover the limits and possibilities of the material. Once they have become familiar with basic methods of construction,

they have the opportunity to experiment more independently to create more expressive and complex works. Interested students may spend some time learning to throw a pot on the wheel, and all students will work with different tools and glazing methods.

Theater Arts - Students learn how to portray characters effectively and vividly. They will learn how to modulate voice, posture, and movements. They exhibit these skills at the end of term Night of Drama.

Woodworking - Woodworking combines the aesthetic awareness of a shop class with the problem-solving strategies of applied technology. Students develop skills in measurement, reading project drawings, sawing, hammering and drilling. In 24 classes, students complete at least two projects.

English Program

Through the study of language arts/English, students will have the opportunity to develop their abilities to read with comprehension, to think critically, to express themselves clearly in speech and writing, and to listen with understanding. Since students' rate of language development varies, the rate at which they acquire knowledge and skills will also vary. All language instruction, however, will aim to provide students with the skills necessary to acquire and to communicate knowledge, to think at higher cognitive levels, and to solve problems and make decisions. Through writing and the study of literature, students will recognize the importance of creativity in themselves and others and will learn to appreciate the work of the artist. Further, they will develop aesthetic enjoyment and judgment and will appreciate the richness of their own and of other cultural heritages. Through literature, students will confront universal concerns and study not only the differences that separate people but also the similarities that unite them.

Concord Middle School English classes are heterogeneously grouped, and within these classes, students are offered a variety of activities relative to their abilities.

The middle school English department is committed to the writing process approach to writing instruction. This recursive process includes prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. We invite you to visit our department website as well as individual teacher websites for additional information: <http://mail.colonial.net/~soelkers/englishweb/index.html>

Grade Six Curriculum - The Concord Middle School's sixth grade English program teaches and evaluates student performance in three areas of language: composition, literature/reading, and language study (grammar, spelling and vocabulary). Students are also graded on conduct as well.

Composition - Within the framework of the writing process, the sixth grader learns to recognize and to understand the thought process behind developing clear and forceful sentences and well-developed, focused paragraphs. The focus of the instruction is primarily the paragraph -- topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion -- as a building block in the structure of an essay. Students experience writing single and multi-paragraph assignments in a variety of genres, including narrative, persuasive, descriptive, and expository. In addition, the research process is taught through an interdisciplinary research project with social studies.

Literature/Reading - Our literature program is focused on the theme: The creation of a person's identity is a journey of self-discovery which leads to an active process of change. In connection with this theme, selected novels, short stories, and poems are studied and discussed in class. Core novels include: A View from Saturday, Julie of the Wolves, and Witness. Additional theme-related titles are studied with each unit to extend and refine the students' literature experience. In addition students further study the elements of literature through the short story genre. Some short stories are integrated into the social studies department's focus on Africa and Latin America. Finally, all 6th grade students are expected to do required outside reading; these independent books are assigned through English/Language arts or in other content areas. Generally, students complete a culminating task for each book they read, allowing for deepening understanding and cognitive connections.

Language Study - This part of the program includes the study of vocabulary, grammar, and the mechanics of language. Vocabulary lessons evolve from the literature being studied. Grammar and mechanics of writing are taught through the writing process where possible. Students learn to recognize nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions and to understand their functions in sentences. Sentence structure and type are also studied. Further, students study figurative language, learn to interpret its meaning in literature, and apply techniques in the construction of their own written work. The major devices include: simile/metaphor, personification, hyperbole, onomatopoeia; and alliteration.

Grade Seven Curriculum - The Concord Middle School seventh grade English program teaches and evaluates student performance in three aspects of language: composition, literature/reading, and language study, and the application of skills from these areas through the writing process. Students are graded on conduct as well.

Composition - The aim in seventh grade composition is for students to learn to write clearly, coherently, and concisely. The focus in the seventh-grade writing program is on helping students learn to develop and carry an idea through multi-paragraph writing. Students practice drafting, revising, and editing as part of the writing process. Types of writing seventh graders may experience include narrative, persuasive, descriptive, and expository. Students also give oral presentations and support their positions on designated subjects.

Literature/Reading - The goals of the literature program are fourfold: first, to develop each student's ability to respond to literature; second, to help students read literature inferentially,

analytically and with appreciation; third, to begin to introduce students to the vocabulary and methodology of literature study; and fourth, to encourage students to view reading as a recreational activity. A central part of the seventh grade literature curriculum is the study of world mythology, folklore, and legend with an emphasis on Greek mythology. This unit includes oral presentations, group projects, essay writing, and persuasive writing. In the light of Joseph Campbell's extensive research on the hero's journey, students examine heroes and heroic stories from Greek culture, other ancient cultures, and contemporary literature and/or media. Some titles include: *The Odyssey*, *The Ramayana*, *Journey to the West*, and *Sundiata*. A twentieth century American novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, is the key novel of the second term; while the Multi-Cultural Book Clubs unit finishes the year. Some titles include: *Habibi*, *Homeless Bird*, *A Samurai's Tale*, *Esperanza Rising*, and *The Examination*. Students also read selected short stories and poems.

During these units, students develop writing skills in response to open-ended questions regarding theme, character development, symbol, conflict, mood, and setting. In addition, the independent reading program encourages individual outside reading. Students are expected to read at home for at least half an hour each day and respond in a variety of written and/or oral forms.

Language Study - This part of the program includes the study of grammar, the mechanics of language, spelling and vocabulary. The study of grammar and mechanics helps students to become more aware of the necessity for precision and accuracy in the use of language. Seventh graders review the rules for capitalization and punctuation and the functions of nouns, adjectives, and verbs in sentences. They next study the functions of the other parts of speech, especially pronouns, adverbs, and prepositions and are introduced to sentence complements and prepositional phrases used as modifiers. Vocabulary is presented in a variety of ways. Methods of presentation include vocabulary lessons with homework assignments and quizzes, a study of Greek and Latin root words and prefixes, as well as words from literature.

Grade Eight Curriculum - The eighth grade English program presents three aspects of the language: composition, literature/reading, and language study. Student performance is evaluated in these areas as well as in conduct.

Composition - During their eighth grade year, students write in a multitude of genres. The aim of the program is for them to learn to vary their writing to fit the genre they are working in as well as to appeal to their audience. Through experiencing many kinds of writing, students also develop their own personal style and voice. Another important focus of the writing program is to improve students' ability to write well-organized, multi-paragraph papers. Writing and defending a thesis with sufficient evidence is introduced, as is developing character, plot, setting and theme in a short story.

Literature/Reading - The study of literature in the eighth grade level has three purposes: to reinforce and to refine reading skills, to expose the student to good literature, and to introduce the student to literary analysis focusing on plot structure, methods of characterization, theme, and setting. All eighth graders study Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Reginald Rose's *12 Angry Men*, William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as numerous short stories, poems, speeches, and novels differentiated by interest, readiness, and learning profile. In addition to

the novels, short stories, poems, and plays examined in class, students are required to read and respond to books on their own in the outside reading program.

Language Study - This part of the program includes the study of grammar and the mechanics of language as well as vocabulary. The study of grammar and mechanics helps the eighth grader become more aware of the necessity for precision and accuracy in the use of language, especially in writing. Vocabulary is presented in a variety of ways; assessment is cumulative. Methods of presentation include vocabulary lessons with homework assignments and quizzes and the study of words from literature.

Family and Consumer Science Program

The Family & Consumer Science Program (FACS) is offered to all grade seven students twice a week, all year. FACS is one of the three courses at the middle school that provide Comprehensive Health Education. The FACS curriculum is integrated with the health and physical education curricula in the Massachusetts Department of Education Health Curriculum Frameworks.

Units of Study

- Skills for healthy growth and development
- Strengthening family relationships
- Conflict management
- Current health issues
- Consumer economics
- Healthy body image and nutrition
- Community service learning

Evaluation in FACS is in general performance and conduct. General performance includes: class work, homework, role plays, discussion, tests and quizzes, a nutrition project, labs and a health research presentation.

Through Family & Consumer Sciences curriculum and instruction, students develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed for responsible and effective management of their lives. FACS assists students at a time when they are assuming greater responsibilities within their homes and communities. This discipline teaches students to integrate the relationships among individuals, families and communities. There are explicit goals for developing positive social skills. The emphasis on positive social interaction encourages tolerance, compassion and a spirit of cooperation.

FACS utilizes technology for solving human problems and meeting human needs. This discipline provides hands-on and inquiry-based experiences that deepen understanding of abstract concepts through encouraging the use of process skills, communications, and reflective thinking. It provides for the direct application of math, science, language arts and other academic skills. It also readily adapts to an interdisciplinary approach, helping students become aware of the connections between knowledge and skills in all areas of the middle school curriculum.

Fundamentals

All sixth grade students participate in the fundamentals class which meets once each week for the full year.

The Fundamentals class teaches students the “fundamentals” for learning. The year begins with an emphasis on study skills and time management strategies as students transition from elementary school to the demands of the middle school academic program. The second part of the year is dedicated to helping students develop their thinking, strategizing, and organizational skills. Active reading methods such as SQ3R, and graphic organizer use are explicitly taught to all students. The last part of the year focuses on developing students’ advanced reading comprehension skills. Students refine their ability to read to learn and to monitor their own comprehension. An additional emphasis is on developing students’ critical thinking skills.

Evaluation - The evaluation will include a general performance grade and a conduct grade.

Health Program

“One needs to be educated to develop and protect one's health, and needs abundant health to make full use of one's education.” Delbert Oberteuffer

This quote serves to reinforce the rationale for the Health Program here at the Concord Middle School. The overall goals of the program are to provide the students with factual information and meaningful learning experiences, so that they are better equipped to make sound health decisions throughout their lives. Health Education is offered to sixth and eighth grade students. At each of these levels, the approach is multi-dimensional in that it deals with the physical, social and emotional aspects of one's health.

Sixth Grade - One Class per Week

The sixth grade program deals with a wide spectrum of health concepts and promotes positive attitudes and behaviors concerning oneself and others. Students learn the relationship between making healthy decisions and showing respect for themselves

Eighth Grade - Two Classes per Week

The eighth grade program deals with similar topics as sixth grade, but zeroes in on understanding self and others from a different level of adolescent development than sixth. Students become aware of the relationship of self-esteem to issues such as peer influence, decision-making, substance abuse, eating disorders, taking good care of your-self and respecting others.

On-going class discussion is a vital part of this eighth grade course, and discussions vary from small to large group depending on the topic. Role-playing is another effective method used at this level to better understand attitudes, behaviors and healthy decisions.

Evaluation - It is expected that all students have a health notebook with a pocket section. Since each student has health once or twice a week, homework assignments will be given in order to increase weekly carry-over of concepts covered. Grading will be based on homework assignments completed, participation in class, and knowledge of subject matter, effort, attitude and conduct.

Health Education Outline

<u>Month</u>	<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>
September	<u>Unit 1:</u> A Healthy YOU Physical, social, emotional aspects	Orientation/What is Health?
October	<u>Unit 2:</u> Respect, Diversity and Handling Conflict	Self-Image Dealing with feelings
November	<u>Unit 2:</u> Respect, Diversity and Handling Conflict	Coping with loss Teenage Stress Managing Emotions
December	<u>Unit 2:</u> Respect, Diversity and Handling Conflict	Substance use/abuse with emphasis on tobacco/alcohol/marijuana
January	<u>Unit 3:</u> Communication skills, managing emotions	Substance use/abuse with emphasis on tobacco/alcohol/marijuana
February	<u>Unit 3:</u> Managing Emotions and social/ friendship issues	Decision-making as a life skill Choices & Consequences
March	<u>Unit 3:</u> Social/ friendship issues reducing stress	Human sexuality – a lifelong experience - Review
April	<u>Unit 4:</u> Substance use/abuse with emphasis on tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalants	Human sexuality – a lifelong experience- Anatomy & Physiology

May	<u>Unit 4:</u> Substance use/abuse with emphasis on tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalants	Human sexuality – a lifelong experience – Relationships & Responsibility
June	<u>Unit 5:</u> Topics in Health Living	Human sexuality - a lifelong experience- Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV/AIDS

Instructional Technology

Students learn the fundamentals of computer literacy through the use of software applications.

Technology Standards:

- Develop proficiency in the use of computers and applications.
- Develop an understanding of concepts of hardware, software and connectivity.
- Use a variety of software applications.
- Demonstrate the ability to use technology for research, problem solving and communication.

Typing - The presentation and practice of conventional typing skills to develop speed and accuracy.

Integration - The Instructional Technology Specialist provides guidance and an understanding of software applications for additional school related activities to accomplish the various academic goals of teachers. The existence of the computer curriculum provides the student with the knowledge they need to master a wide spectrum of technology rich activities. The focus of the Instructional Technology Education program is to promote the integration of the computer as a tool to support teaching and learning in all curriculum areas. Students experience how computers are used to support their work by learning how to select the appropriate software tool to accomplish a particular task and then using that application to complete assigned projects within various curriculum areas.

Grade Six - All students are scheduled for computer classes in the main computer lab for one period per week throughout the school year. The goals of this course are:

- To introduce students to the Macintosh computer environment.
- To provide basic to intermediate level competencies in using applications such as word processing, keyboarding, internet browsers, multimedia presentation tools, and spreadsheets.
- To enable students to understand and identify various components of a computer system.
- To enable students to select the appropriate tool for the task.
- To enable students to develop problem solving approaches to using computers.

Grade Seven and Grade Eight - The Instructional Technology department offers seventh and eighth grade students three different multimedia course electives to further their knowledge in more advanced computer applications. In addition, the Instructional Technology Specialists provide technical support for teachers and their classes as well as for individual students in the selection and use of a wide variety of software.

Library

The library is an integral part of the Concord Middle School. Its purpose is to support and enrich all areas of the curriculum and to provide interesting and informative material for students. The collection is carefully maintained with special attention toward quality, interest, variety, multi-cultural richness and age appropriate reading levels.

Research is supported through print resources, internet, and on-line subscription databases. Close collaboration exists with the libraries and computer labs, and each library is fully automated with Destiny (Follett) providing access to all library collections in the Concord elementary and middle schools, as well as Concord-Carlisle High School.

The school year begins with a week of library orientation for all sixth grade students. The focus of this week is to become familiar with the facilities, Destiny catalog systems, learn the procedures, and to be introduced to some new skills. Seventh and eighth grade students are given a refresher class on using the Destiny system to locate books and to access our on-line databases.

The library research schedule is determined in June for the following year. Social studies, English, world language and FACS bring classes in all grades to the library for research projects. Teachers may also sign up for available space and resources any time during the school year, and students are encouraged to come to the library for study hall, lunch, or other unscheduled times during the day. Other teachers request that library resources be placed in the classroom to support ongoing curriculum units. Classes come in during the year for book talks supporting outside reading projects. Students in all grades receive individual and class instruction in search strategies for electronic reference applications, periodical indexes and the Internet.

The library staff is always available to make recommendations for outside reading. Students may check out most material for two weeks; reserve books and magazines may be checked out overnight. Reminders for overdue materials are given to students in homeroom for up to four weeks; overdue notices are then sent home. Students should settle their accounts before they check out new material. Students will be billed for any material that has been lost, damaged beyond repair, or not returned.

The library staff is comprised of a Library Media Specialist who coordinates all programs in both buildings, and a full time assistant in each library who oversees the operation of the facility. The

libraries encourage and welcome the service of volunteers. Each library needs help in general operation and maintenance tasks. Volunteers also run the PTG Gift Book Program, a very successful initiative that allows parents to purchase books for the libraries honoring a special person. PTG gift books are available at Back-to-School night in the fall. Volunteers have also assisted in processing and displaying new books for the Annual Read-Off, a non-competitive reading program that runs for four weeks in the spring, beginning with National Library Week.

Mathematics Program

The mathematics program is based on the guiding principles of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics. The development of procedures and skills emphasizes conceptual understanding as well as connections to the students' world. Problem solving, communication, reasoning and proof, making connections and using representations are integral pieces of the program.

Math classes are divided into three levels, directed, guided, and independent, reflecting differences in learning style and ability to deal with abstract concepts. The content is organized around the same general topics for each grade. The differences among the levels are in the methodology used to present each of the topics, the level of abstraction, and the types of applications. A letter outlining the various criteria of the placement process for the next grade is sent home in the fall so that students and parents are aware of the criteria throughout the year. An evening meeting (about two weeks later) provides an opportunity to ask questions regarding placement. Students may change levels at any time during the year when student performance indicates that such a change is appropriate.

Sixth Grade Curriculum - Calculators are rarely used in sixth grade and are provided when necessary.

Number Sense and Operation - The whole number concepts studied include exponents, divisibility, and number operations using the standard order of operations. The study of prime, composite, deficient and abundant numbers provides the number facility needed for Least Common Multiple and Greatest Common Factor. Operations with fractions and decimals are reviewed with emphasis on multiplication and division procedures. Ratio, proportion, and percent are explored in various applications. Students are encouraged to use concrete models to solidify their conceptual understanding of the processes studied. In addition, periodic, timed computation drills provide students and teachers with on-going feedback on the mastery level of computational skills.

Patterns, Relationships, and Algebra - Students learn specific strategies and share their own approaches to solving problems. Emphasis is on being able to communicate mathematically using a variety of representations and specific mathematical vocabulary. Students use tables and graphs to

analyze patterns and write generalized expressions using variables. A wide variety of resources are used for instructional purposes for non-routine problem solving including previous Continental Math League contests. The results of the current year's thirty-minute contests, held once a month starting in November, are used for placement purposes.

Geometry and Measurement - Students explore transformational geometry and tessellations as they identify the relationships among points, lines, and angles, review the characteristics of polygons and formalize the concepts of similarity and congruence. Areas of triangles, parallelograms and circles are explored. Some perspective drawings of three-dimensional objects may be included. Standard unit measurements are in both U.S. customary units and metric units.

Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability - Students explore the concept of chance through the use of spinners, coins, and dice. They use tree diagrams to model results and differentiate between experimental and theoretical probability. Stem and leaf plots are added to the students' repertoire of graphing skills. In addition to calculating the mean of a data set, students determine median, mode, and range in an effort to describe the "typical" data item.

Seventh Grade Curriculum - All students are required to have a scientific calculator for class work, homework, and most quizzes and tests.

Number Sense and Operation - All students work toward becoming proficient in all operations with rational numbers as well as being able to represent a number in a variety of equivalent forms. In addition, students refine and extend their understanding of ratios, percents, and proportions. As in sixth grade, students are encouraged to use concrete models to solidify their conceptual understanding of the processes studied. A greater emphasis is placed on the written form of mathematical procedures (what your work looks like), such as specific procedures for solving proportions and other equations.

Patterns, Relationships, and Algebra - Problem solving is an integrated, on-going process. Students begin to organize mathematical relationships according to the rules of mathematics. Concepts include properties of arithmetic, translating and evaluating expressions, solving open sentences and inequalities, and investigating linear relationships through tables and graphs. As in sixth grade, students participate in the Continental Math League, five monthly contests each consisting of six non-routine problems to be solved in 30 minutes.

Geometry and Measurement - Students apply their understanding of area to more complicated situations, extending this knowledge to the surface area and the volume of solids. Students are expected to understand the derivations of formulas, find the missing component of a formula, and use a formula to solve problems. The Pythagorean Theorem, similar triangles, and scale drawings become important in the study of ramps and indirect measurement.

Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability - The emphasis in the statistics unit is on interpreting results. Students present multiple data sets in line, bar, and circle graphs as well as some relatively new graphs, namely, box and whiskers and stem and leaf. Although some computer work may be done, constructing the graphs by hand causes students to focus more on scales and other components of the display. By calculating range, mean, median, mode, and quartiles, students learn to draw conclusions about what is typical in a sample.

Using data from games of chance, students explore probability concepts including independent and dependent events, the Fundamental Counting Principle, permutations, and combinations. A variety of strategies including tree diagrams and Pascal's Triangle are employed.

Eighth Grade Curriculum - This is a year of algebra for all students. The directed level reinforces pre-algebra concepts and skills through an algebra lens. By the end of the year, they have completed half a year of algebra I. The guided and independent levels complete a full year of algebra I. All students are required to have a scientific calculator for class work, homework, and most quizzes and tests.

Number Sense and Operation - Students become proficient in the language of algebra. They stretch their knowledge of arithmetic concepts to an abstract level by working with polynomial and irrational expressions. They simplify expressions, solve equations and inequalities, and apply these concepts to everyday situations.

Geometry and Measurement - Students become skilled at graphing real numbers on a number line and on a coordinate plane. They use graphing as one method of solving systems of equations and inequalities and identify functions by their graphs. Although little geometry beyond graphing functions is included in this course, some students may be introduced to the distance formula or the triangle inequality theorem.

Patterns, Relationships, and Algebra - Systems thinking is integrated into the linear and exponential graphing units as students represent behavior over time graphically. Students analyze both data tables and graphs in order to write equations. Patterns of linear, exponential, and quadratic equations are identified. The role of exponents and coefficients in determining the characteristics of the graphs of these equations is emphasized.

Focused Interventions in Mathematics (FM) This math intervention program is offered to students who have math goals on their IEP or to students who have scored in the warning/low needs improvement level (220-235) on MCAS math tests. It meets three times per week in sixth grade and twice per week in seventh and eighth grades. The overall goal of the course is help students attain grade level math skills through:

- Mastery of number facts.
- Proficiency with procedures for operations with numbers through further concept development and repeated practice.
- Use of appropriate resources such as reference cards, math dictionaries, math texts, and appropriate technologies.
- Additional concept development in geometry and measurement, probability and statistics, patterns and relationships, algebraic thinking and problem solving.

METCO Program

The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO) is a successful model of urban-suburban integration. This program, which is funded by the State Department of Education,

aims to provide a good education for minority students from Boston while helping to eliminate racial isolation in suburban schools. More than 3,000 students participate in this program in thirty communities surrounding Boston. The Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District joined the METCO program in 1967. Presently, there are slightly more than 100 Boston resident students throughout varying grades in the three elementary school buildings and the two middle school buildings.

Music Program

All types of sensory awareness enrich a person's life. The study of music serves as a means for developing the aural sense. Aural awareness does not consist only of passive response, it implies the development of interpretive skills on the intellectual, emotional and aesthetic levels. The use of these skills is essential to the development of creative expression in individuals. Music is an accessible means for the expression of creativity, through both active participation and informed, intelligent listening. Creative expression may be enhanced through the development of skills in singing and playing musical instruments.

Instruction in music should contribute to the student's intellectual and social development in the following areas:

- Focus on music as an expression of culture and as an integral part of our cultural heritage.
- Relationship between music and the student's present social and cultural environment. Students regularly apply the skills they have learned in math, English, social studies, science, and foreign language.
- Understanding of concepts which are used in music as well as in other disciplines
- Acquisition of technical skills needed to participate in a variety of musical performance situations.

General Music - General Music is a required subject for all sixth and seventh grade students and meets twice each week. Students are evaluated in four areas: quality of work (how well students accomplish projects and score on tests), effort and participation (how much each student contributes to his/her class), creativity (originality of work and individual insights on projects), and behavior (every student is expected to behave in a manner which enhances the learning experience of others).

Class sizes vary and are dictated for the most part by overall scheduling considerations. Homework is assigned in music when it is felt that individual work will enhance the student's ability to accomplish projects during class time or when a report on a specific topic is required. Assignments which do not require research should take no more than thirty minutes to complete. The majority of work in music is expected to be completed during class time.

Sixth Grade General Music - Students review the basic concepts of music which include rhythm, melody, harmony, form, expression and timbre. These concepts have been introduced in elementary school. Each concept is explored through a variety of activities: listening, analysis of written music, singing, original composition, performance on class instruments, interpretation of music through movement, and learning about the techniques, capabilities, and sounds of musical instruments. There is no assigned text for sixth grade music, but enrichment is provided through selected audio-visual materials and through occasional live performances. Students are exposed to a wide variety of musical styles and idioms and are encouraged to develop analytical listening skills which are applicable to all types of music. Individual creativity is strongly encouraged within the context of group projects, in which students exchange and combine their ideas to create original musical expressions.

Seventh Grade General Music - Music in grade seven builds on the skills developed in grade six. Students are encouraged to develop their interests in specific areas of music. Included among the course offerings are Musical Theatre, American Music (Folk, Jazz, Blues, Rock & Roll), Music and Movement, Composition, and Music of Other Cultures. Students accomplish the greatest part of their work in these courses through group projects. Students are given maximum freedom to develop their own ideas within guidelines designed to provide organization and cohesiveness to audio-visual media. Students' analytical and interpretative listening skills are emphasized, and the growth of musical awareness in each student is encouraged.

Music Performance Groups

All grade six students select Band, Chorus or Orchestra prior to or upon entering grade. Students are strongly urged to continue with this selection for their three years in the middle school in order to acquire a meaningful and comprehensive knowledge of music. This selection indicates a commitment to all performances for the entire school year.

Concert Band and Honors Stage Band - Concert Band will meet twice a week during regularly scheduled periods at each grade level.

The 6th grade after school band lessons are considered an integral part of the 6th grade band curriculum and usually indicate the musical skill and grade of the student. These group lessons are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (based on the instrument).

Music literacy and the ability to read and translate written music into an aural, emotional and communicative art form is our objective. The joy of discovering music of many styles and idioms and successfully performing that music on traditional wind and percussion instruments is our endeavor. Public concerts are presented twice a year.

The Honors Stage Band meets on Tuesdays, after school, until 2:45. Members of this group are chosen by audition from among the members of Concert Band and Orchestra since they have developed the skill of playing music in a group context. This group represents the most eclectic of musical tastes; performing music from jazz, rock, blues, rhythm and blues, soul and funk idioms.

Evaluation – Students will be assessed according to class participation, effort and performance skills. Grades are issued for members of performing groups and participation in the concert performances is 50% of a student's evaluation process.

Chorus - The Chorus classes give students the opportunity to experience large group singing and work on the skills associated with the art of Choral Music. Evaluations and grades are issued for members of the chorus class. Students will be assessed according to class participation, note taking, development of vocal skills/technique, written assignments, and performance exams. Participation in performances is 40% of a student's trimester grade.

After School Choruses - Students may also audition for the Treble Chorus (Select Chorus) or the A Capella choir (Chamber Choir). These groups are open to any students in Band, Chorus or Orchestra and are a great opportunity for student instrumentalists to sing choral music.

Orchestra - The orchestra class is a continuation of the string program that starts in grade four. Grade six orchestra and grade seven/eight orchestra meet twice a week. Students rehearse orchestral works and perform them three times a year. Other performance opportunities are available, including the Eastern District auditions for seventh and eighth graders. Beside playing a string instrument, students learn other skills, such as self discipline, team work, responsibility, sight reading, expression and listening.

Physical Education Program

Physical education at the Concord Middle School is multi-directional. In the physical realm, the purpose is to improve flexibility, strength and cardiovascular endurance. Students are taught various ways to stretch and strengthen their bodies. Emphasis is placed on knowledge and performance of various activities to improve these areas. Socially, there are many benefits to be derived from participation in physical activities. Good sportsmanship is stressed in all activities. Students are taught to handle competition in a healthy way. They learn that giving their best effort is more important than winning or losing. In the realm of knowledge, students learn many important aspects of having a healthy, physical fitness and how to achieve and maintain a good fitness level.

Physical education classes are structured with a relaxed atmosphere to lessen inhibitions which may prevent participation. The basic philosophy of physical education at the middle school is "to turn students on to physical activity." Our aim is to have students feel good about themselves when they are physically active and to develop a desire to participate in more physical activities. All our physical education classes are co-educational. Girls and boys compete equally and together in compliance with Massachusetts State Law, Chapter 622.

The curriculum for the middle school physical education program is made up of team sports, individual sports, lifetime sports and group problem-solving activities. Team sports teach students how to play together and function as a member of a team and to coordinate individual efforts to achieve a goal. Team sports taught include: soccer, speedball, football, lacrosse, basketball, floor hockey, volleyball and softball. Individual sports give students a chance to better their previous performance. These activities give the students a chance to push themselves as much as they choose. Individual activities include: fitness testing, cross country skiing, track and field, paddle ball, table tennis and badminton.

Group problem-solving activities are invaluable. They teach students to work together as a unit to solve various tasks. These activities build confidence, develop cooperation and break down social inhibitions. They foster feelings of togetherness, accomplishment and pride. Individual activities challenge students and get them to push themselves to further accomplishments. Many sports have great "carry over" value and increase participation later on in life and after school. Some of these "life long" activities include basketball, volleyball, softball and jogging.

Physical education classes meet twice a week for all middle schoolers. Students are graded on performance, attitude, conduct and effort with the greatest emphasis being placed on attitude and effort.

A student may be excused for one day of Physical Education class, because of an injury or illness, with a note from a parent. If a longer time is warranted, a note from a Health Professional is required and is kept in the Student Health Record in the building Health Office.

Science Program

Our middle school science program builds upon students' natural curiosity and love of exploration as they learn to think critically about the world around them. Working as individuals and in cooperative learning groups, students develop analytical and reasoning skills. They learn to make hypotheses, conduct experiments, record observations, interpret data, and draw conclusions. Our goal is to cultivate an active interest in science and to develop students' capability to pursue a future in the scientific world. Based on this rationale, the science program includes the following:

1. Aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the curricula provide students with a wide variety of information from the earth/space, life, and physical sciences.
2. Much of the students' scientific knowledge is derived from or reinforced by experimental evidence. Laboratory work is part of each course.
3. An academic environment exists which addresses a variety of learning styles and abilities.
4. Grades are given for tests, quizzes, labs/assignments, and conduct.

Sixth Grade - The sixth grade earth science curriculum explores our universe and planet. Major topics include:

- Astronomy
- Atmosphere, Oceans, Weather and Climate
- Natural Disasters
- Topography
- Earth Formation and Structure
- Plate Tectonics
- Rocks and Minerals
- Weathering and Erosion
- Earth History and Geologic Time

In the sixth grade students gain the skills needed for working in a laboratory setting. Students learn proper use and measurement with scientific equipment. They make hypotheses, observe, collect and organize data, and begin the process of analyzing and interpreting data. The emphasis is on inquiry and problem solving through hands-on experiences.

The text for the course is Science Explorer Series, published by Prentice Hall.

Seventh Grade - The seventh grade life science program encompasses the nature of living things: their organization and function and the ecological interactions between them and their environment. Students study various organisms from the five kingdoms of life. Their investigation includes a study of the structure and function of the human body with a focus on the interaction and interdependence of the various organ systems. Throughout the year, teachers focus on biodiversity and adaptations of various life forms, relating these studies to the environment. Learning experiences include microscope work with new digital scopes, research, laboratory investigation, and a survey of life in the schoolyard ecosystem. Scientific skill building emphasizes keen observation, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analytical problem solving.

The text for the course is Life Science in the Science and Technology series published by Holt.

Eighth Grade - Eighth grade is a course in physical science, based on five major units:

- Energy: Its Uses, Forms, and Importance in our world
- Physics: Motion and Forces
- Matter, the Building Block of the Universe
- The Chemistry of Matter
- Application of Scientific Inquiry

Students use logical reasoning, based on experimental evidence, to develop a model for the behavior of matter. They use their experimental data to interpret and predict physical and chemical changes in the laboratory and the world. In December, students will work in teams to design and construct a water wheel that is able to lift a load. Students use the skills they have learned about forces, work, and power to modify the designs and ultimately optimize the system. Throughout the year, students keep a laboratory notebook and build essential skills for designing their own experiments. There are regular reading and other homework assignments to solidify the work in class.

The text for the course is Foundations of Physical Science published by CPO.

Social Studies Program

Social studies offers all students the opportunity to investigate how humans have related to their physical and social environments. In social studies, students study history, geography, anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science and economics. Because social studies emphasizes both similarities and differences among humans, learning together in heterogeneous groups will be especially valuable as a means of providing learning experiences well-matched to the individual's achievement and potential while allowing students to experience different points of view.

Students will achieve competency in each of the social studies areas through reading, writing, and discussion. Students will work individually and in groups, role-play, complete projects, and review current events. It is important that students have access to a daily newspaper and other sources such as news magazines, radio and television that will prepare them to discuss current events within the context of the subject matter being studied. While written homework in social studies is not assigned each and every night, it should be expected a number of times per week.

Student performance is evaluated in many ways, including written homework, class discussions, projects, group work, oral and written reports and unit tests. The report card grade categories in social studies are tests/quizzes/projects, homework/classwork assignments, class participation and conduct.

Skills - During the year, there will be emphasis on developing the following skills:

Geography:

- making neat and accurate maps
- recognizing the influence of geography upon history
- reading and interpreting various types of maps

History:

- dealing with primary sources of evidence
- reading and interpreting timelines, charts, tables, graphs, and diagrams
- understanding and interpreting historical artifacts & photographs
- comparing conflicting versions of historical events
- differentiating between fact and opinion
- dealing with cause and effect
- drawing conclusions from evidence

Classroom:

- taking notes
- working independently and in cooperative groups
- participating in setting goals and planning for their implementation
- developing oral discussion skills, including the confidence to express one's own ideas

Grade Six Curriculum – Global Perspectives – Journeys: This curriculum is an introduction to the discipline of geography and a study of Africa and Latin America. Students learn basic geographic

skills and concepts, and explore the physical and human geography of two specific continents in a historical context.

Students develop a number of skills essential to becoming independent and critical thinkers. Resources include expository texts, globes, atlases, databases, news articles, periodicals, films, and primary sources.

The study of early cultures begins with an investigation of early humans. The students learn how civilization developed by studying Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. Students learn about each continent in an order that reflects, first, the early development of the river valley civilizations and then the later development of empires.

Within each unit of study, students will find rich and varied opportunities to expand knowledge and skills, to develop creative talents and to deepen their appreciation and respect for the Earth and its people.

Content Overview:

What are the social sciences?

Five Themes of Geography

Archeology/Early Humans

Neolithic Revolution/Characteristics of Civilization

Mesopotamia

Egypt

Early Kingdoms of Africa

Africa: Colonialism and Independence

Modern Geography of Africa

Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs

Latin America: Colonialism and Independence

Modern Geography of Latin America

Grade Seven Curriculum – Global Perspectives – The Origins of Cultures Past and Present - The seventh grade students study ancient civilizations. Students focus on the organizing questions: "What connects us all as human beings?", "What do we have in common with peoples of the past?", "What defines a culture?", and "How can we gain understanding and respect for other cultures?" Concepts from the sixth grade curriculum will be expanded for students both to use as an outline when viewing any world culture and also to help them see that although humans everywhere have the same needs, they adapt differently to their home environments. Students should appreciate the differences among peoples of the world while at the same time understand their similarities.

Students cover the following ancient civilizations: Israelites, the Indus Valley, China, Greece, and Rome. All of these civilizations will be studied through 500 AD. The themes of religious thought, government, and geography will appear in all of the units. As a basic resource for students, we have selected *History Alive!*, published by Teachers Curriculum Institute. In addition, the Nystrom Atlas of World History provides a geographic context for the civilizations we encounter. Throughout the year, the curriculum will include a variety of primary sources, guest speakers, and interdisciplinary activities as additional resources.

The final unit of study is the Middle East region. During this unit, students will continue to apply their historical, geographic, economic, and social analytic techniques as they study both the past and the present of this intriguing crossroads of cultures. The Middle East unit emphasizes the historical impact of religious and cultural differences in that diverse region.

A key goal of this year-long curriculum is to enable students to better understand the world religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and the part religious ideas have played in shaping human history. Many other aspects of cultures such as art, language, and traditions are incorporated into these units of study, as are opportunities to meet and learn from people from these cultures.

Content Overview:

- How do different cultures explain their origins?
- Components of Civilization
- Israelites
- Ancient and Classical Greece
- Rome
- India
- China
- Middle East

Grade Eight Curriculum – The United States - A Search for Justice - In the eighth grade students focus primarily on the culture and history of the United States as they consider the question, "What are the conditions that create a just society?" In the opening unit, "The U. S. Government," students study both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to gain an understanding of the structure and function of the federal government and of the value dilemmas inherent in the application of the Bill of Rights as justice for all under the law is sought.

During "Facing History & Ourselves: The Holocaust and Human Behavior," students enlarge their understanding of the key concepts which emerged in the government unit: justice, power, law, obedience, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. By examining the unjust and tragic events that occurred in Nazi Germany, students gain a greater appreciation of the ideals sought in the American system of government. Students explore how society influences the individual and how decisions made by individuals can affect society. Through comparing and contrasting activities, students examine the process in Nazi Germany through which human rights were lost and the processes in the United States through which rights were gained.

Students study the struggle of African-Americans to achieve their full civil rights in order to learn how Americans have overcome past injustices, and how other groups of Americans, such as Hispanics and women, also have continued to work for their full rights and responsibilities.

A culminating assignment, the 8th grade research paper, done in collaboration with English, asks students to consider their year-long study of justice and society. Students select an issue of justice they feel "passionately about" to explore more deeply. The eighth grade social studies teachers teach students research skills, helping them to develop focusing questions, note-taking, write internal citations, outline and write a research-driven essay that they present to the class.

As a last unit, students study a unit called "Becoming a United States Citizen: The Story of Our People," which focuses on the story of groups of people who have immigrated to the U.S. and who have attempted to become full partners in the American experience. Using the *Choices* curriculum created at Brown University, students explore current issues in immigration with a debate format.

Content Overview:

The U.S. Government

- The Constitution of Our People
- The Bill of Rights

Facing History & Ourselves: The Holocaust & Human Behavior Project

African American Experiences

- The Civil Rights Movement & Its Effects

Becoming a U.S. Citizen - The Story of Our People

- Immigration

Special Education Program

In accordance with IDEA-2004, each special needs school-age child has the right to an appropriate and individualized educational program. Eligibility for special education services is dependent on 1) an inability to progress effectively in a regular educational program and 2) a need for special education intervention because of temporary or more permanent adjustment difficulties or attributes arising from intellectual, sensory, emotional or physical factors, cerebral dysfunctions, perceptual factors, or other specific learning disabilities, or any combination of the above.

When there is a concern about a child's performance in school, a referral for an evaluation can be made by school personnel, parents/guardians, judicial officer, social worker, family physician or by the child. Referrals are made to the guidance counselor or building principal.

On the basis of referral concerns and questions, an evaluation will be conducted by trained personnel in those areas (such as reading, mathematics, cognition, etc.) agreed upon by members of the evaluation TEAM, which includes parents/guardians. If a child is found to have special needs which cannot be adequately met within regular education, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed and signed by parents/guardians before a child can begin to receive special education services. The Special Education Department at the middle school provides a range of services to meet the individual needs of students. These services include:

- supporting the performance of students in regular education classes;
- providing consultation to regular education teachers around curriculum modification or behavior management techniques;

- small group remedial instruction or academic support in the Learning Center;
- a counseling group designed to address the affective, social and personal development of students;
- speech and language services, and occupational therapy services.

These services are specifically prescribed for a student at the recommendation of all members of the Evaluation TEAM. The progress of each student is regularly reviewed at an annual meeting convened by the Case Manager assigned to the student. In addition, every three years a student receives a reevaluation in those same areas assessed previously. At every step of the process, parental consent and involvement is mandatory. For more specific information concerning special education services, contact Student Support Services at Ripley.

Student Services

Guidance Department

The middle school age student goes through more changes physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially than he/she has experienced since age two. These years are a time when young adolescents are dealing with feelings of autonomy versus dependency, coping with a new social and educational environment and higher academic expectations. It is a period of mastery, conformity, and testing; a time of uncertainty toward self and others, frequently hidden behind a mask of bravado and experimental behavior. Many are also dealing with changes in their family structure and familial relationships. It is miraculous that some are able to take such giant leaps educationally at the same time. However, there are few children who experience no disruption in their educational involvement and/or achievement, social adaptability, or emotional adjustment.

The primary goal of the Concord Middle School Guidance Department is to be of assistance to students as events occur which disrupt their educational process. In order to do this, it is first necessary to have a relationship with the student whenever possible. It is also important to have open access to and dialogue with whatever adults impact on his/her life: family, school staff and administration, and community resources. It is, therefore, not surprising that counselors spend approximately forty percent of their time directly with students and forty percent of their time with adults who have direct contact with students.

As disruptions in the educational process occur, the problem must be analyzed and decisions made on the most effective intervention strategy, if any. Both analysis and strategy planning might be made in coordination with parents, teachers, student, guidance counselor, administrators, specialists, health professional and/or outside agencies. Once a strategy is decided, the counselor may or may not be directly involved but continues to reassess the effectiveness of the intervention and re-plan according to needs.

Through the Guidance Department, the Concord Middle School provides services and offers programs dealing with instructional, developmental and/or personal issues which affect a student's learning process.

Service Policy Statement

The services provided by the Middle School Guidance Department are determined by the needs of this age student, some of which are unique to early adolescents and some of which are common to all students regardless of age. The manner in which these services are provided is determined by the needs of students, the internal structure of the Concord Middle School and the staffing patterns within the Department.

Counselors help students achieve realistic educational goals by providing social, psychological and educational services to pupils, families and staff.

Services to Students in:

- understanding self in relation to others
- increasing their ability to make personal, social and academic decisions
- assessing their own strengths and weaknesses
- accepting more responsibility for their own learning
- understanding their difficulties and participating in the problem solving process
- developing adequate self-discipline

Services to Parents in:

- helping to understand adolescent behavior
- coordinating family/school efforts toward meeting students' needs
- facilitating communication between school and home
- increasing awareness of the effects of varying aspects of the environment on the students' performance
- participating in parent conferences

Services to Staff/Administrators in:

- providing relevant information about the dynamics of students' difficulties
- providing support to staff and students toward the resolution of difficulties
- providing ongoing consultation as part of the House Team
- conferring with specialists in formulating programs for Special Needs students

The Guidance Department is the liaison between home and school and focuses on the maintenance of a positive home/school communication. This is done through parent conferences and informal group parent meetings which provide opportunities to share thoughts, concerns and issues. Conferences are set up to respond to parent needs through the guidance secretary in either building.

Standardized Testing

MCAS testing is given to all students in the spring.

Reporting Student Progress

Report cards are mailed home three times a year: early December, mid-March and the end of the year. Each department determines the categories in which it wishes to grade its students, i.e., literature, lab performances, homework, work habits, conduct, etc.

Interim Reports on each student are sent by all academic teachers in the middle of the 1st term (late October) to inform parents and students of students' academic progress. At the middle of the following two terms, teachers usually send an interim to report any extreme changes in academic performance. Teachers use the Interim Reports to highlight significant progress or to report a decline in performance.

Parent conferences may be requested at any time throughout the year by parents, teachers or counselors. If a student is experiencing difficulty in only one subject, parents may wish to arrange an individual conference with that subject area teacher. If the concerns are more global, parents may wish to request a House conference. The teachers who attend a House conference are the student's four academic teachers, world languages teacher and the guidance counselor. Parents and teachers have found House conferences to be a very effective method of exchanging information and planning for a student.

To arrange a conference, parents should call the Guidance Office of the appropriate building (Peabody: 978-341-2490, x-5102; Sanborn: 978-341-2490, x-6102. The times available for a conference vary. When calling for a conference, parents will be advised of the conference times available. Parents will find that there is a range of times so that their schedules can be accommodated as well.

The length of the conference is limited to approximately twenty minutes. This time limitation allows the school to provide the opportunity for conferences with more parents. Of course, if more time is needed, a second conference can be arranged. Exceptions to the twenty minute limit can and will be made depending upon the particular purpose of the conference.

Student Records and Regulations

The confidentiality of a student's permanent record, as required by state statute (Chapter 71, 34E of 1973) is respected. A parent or legal guardian may inspect the contents of their child's record by filing a written request with the principal. A staff member will review the record with parents. The release of any information contained in student records to a third party (such as for school pictures, newspaper articles, etc.) will not be permitted unless consent is given by the parent. A form to provide such consent is sent home at the start of each school year.

When a student transfers from Concord Middle School to another public school system, it is the practice of Concord Middle School to forward a student's complete record to the public school in which that student enrolls. (Code of Massachusetts Regulations: 603 CMR 23.00 -23.07)

The school procedures for student records comply with the requirements of Chapter 71 of the General Laws of Massachusetts and Section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, a federal statute also known as the "Buckley Amendment." Some of the major provisions of these laws are:

- 1) Any parent, or student who is 14 or has entered the ninth grade, has the right to examine all records that are maintained on the student by the school system, regardless of the record's physical form or location. This includes standardized test scores, subjective evaluations by teachers or others, psychological tests, and discipline records. Copies of documents in a student's record folder are available from the Guidance Office.
- 2) Any parent or eligible student has the right to add any materials or statement to the student record. Any parent or eligible student may request the principal to remove or amend material from a student record. The parent or student has a right to appeal an adverse decision by the principal to the superintendent, the school committee, the courts, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

World Languages Program

The learning of a second language presents to a student a variety of opportunities for intellectual and personal growth. It offers exposure to another culture and provides a new perspective on one's own language and environment. Knowledge of a second language opens doors to understanding and to sharing in the experiences of other people.

The world languages program at the Concord Middle School consists of courses in French, Mandarin, and Spanish. Students begin their sequential study of language in the sixth grade and continue with the same language in the seventh and eighth grades. All classes are heterogeneously grouped. Classes meet three times per week in the sixth grade and four times per week in the seventh and eighth grades.

The world languages program seeks to develop proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A major goal of the program is to help students develop communicative skills in a cultural context at a novice level of proficiency.

Students learn to function in a variety of social settings. They acquire the grammatical structures as needed to accomplish these functions. Language skills and cultural knowledge are enhanced by the use of audio and videotapes, CDs, internet activities, songs, cultural materials, and readings. Varied methods such as group work, paired work, and direct instruction are used to help all students develop communicative proficiency.

Students are evaluated in three areas: assignments, general performance and conduct. Assignments are an integral component of the program and home preparation is necessary for each class meeting period. Assignments include vocabulary study and practice, workbook and writing activities, role plays, oral preparation, and projects. The general performance grade is based on tests, quizzes, class participation, listening exercises, speaking activities and effort. Participation in individual, paired, and group activities is an essential part of the class work grade. The conduct grade is based on a student's behavior in class. Students are provided with criteria for each of the above areas of assessment.

The program is fully articulated with courses offered at Concord-Carlisle High School. The high school offers introductory courses in French, Chinese, Latin and Spanish. Satisfactory work in the

middle school program ensures that a student will be placed into an appropriate continuing level of French, Mandarin or Spanish at the high school. The middle school teacher's recommendation for high school placement is based on the student's demonstrated achievement and exhibited facility with the language.